

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 to 19 (Canceled)

20. (Currently Amended) A nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide ~~that~~ consisting of an amino acid sequence identical to a region of a wild type HBV core protein, wherein:

(a) the polypeptide comprises a first amino acid sequence at least 70 and less than all of the contiguous amino acids in length that is identical to a region of a wild type HBV core protein;

(b) the carboxyterminal amino acid of the polypeptide corresponds to position 175 or 178 of SEQ ID NO:12; lacks a second amino acid sequence of the wild type HBV core protein, wherein the second sequence comprises the carboxyterminal three amino acids of the wild type HBV core protein and does not exceed nine amino acids in length; and

(c) the polypeptide reduces hepadnavirus replication;[,] and

(d) wherein the nucleic acid is operably linked to a promoter selected from the group consisting of hepatocyte-specific, cytomegalovirus, herpes simplex virus, hepatitis virus, Rous sarcoma virus and Simian Virus 40 promoters and wherein the carboxyterminal amino acid of the first amino acid sequence corresponds to position 175 or 178 of SEQ ID NO: 12.

21 to 37 (Canceled)

38. (New) A vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 20.

39. (New) A cultured host cell comprising the nucleic acid of claim 20.

40. (New) A fusion protein comprising the polypeptide encoded by the nucleic acid of claim 20.